



Children with health needs who cannot attend school

Primary and Secondary Academies

November 2024

Purpose

Parents and carers have the prime responsibility of their children's health and well-being.

Our academies aim to support the parents and carers in conjunction with the local authority and ensure that all pupils who are unable to attend school due to medical needs and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows to enable them to reach their full potential.

Due to the nature of their health needs, some pupils may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision.

We recognise that, whenever possible pupils should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are well enough.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not in school and will work with the LA, health care partners and families to ensure that all pupils with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

We are aware that on occasion pupils may travel overseas to access medical support. In these circumstances, it is unlikely that we will be able to provide the level of support that we would wish to. We will deal with these situations on a case-by-case basis and in line with our attendance procedures.

This policy reflects the requirements of the: -

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE Guidance for local authorities entitled '*Ensuring a good education for pupils who cannot attend school because of health needs*'.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school
- DfE Guidance '*Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions*'.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

Categories

Pupils who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs may include those with: -

- physical health issues
- physical injuries
- mental health problems, including anxiety issues
- emotional difficulties or school refusal
- progressive conditions
- terminal illnesses
- chronic illnesses

Pupils who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend any of the following: -

- Hospital school
A special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment
- Home tuition
The Local Authority may provide home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and pupils on occasions where pupils are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment.
- Medical attendance support units (ASU)
These are local authority establishments which help pupils, unable to attend their school due to their physical or mental health needs, reintegrate back into education in a smaller setting.
- Remote / online learning
This will be used only for the shortest period practicable as part of a planned reintegration to face to face learning.

Local authority responsibilities

The local authority must arrange suitable full-time education for pupils of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support the local authority in doing so.

The local authority should: -

- provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil. Ensure the education pupils receive is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- address the needs of individual pupils in arranging provision.
- have a named officer responsible for the education of pupils with additional health needs and ensure parents know who this is.
- have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards pupils with additional health needs.
- review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.
- give clear policies on the provision of education for pupils and young people under and over compulsory school age.

The local authority should not: -

- have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.
- withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost.
- have policies based upon the percentage of time a child is able to attend school rather than whether the child is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for pupils or inflexible policies which result in pupils going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in).

Academy responsibilities

The Academy is responsible for: -

- ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- ensuring the regular review of the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend school due to their medical needs.
- ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils are clear and understood by all.
- ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents, for both on- and off-site activities.
- ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained.
- working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of pupils.
- ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- providing teachers who support pupils with health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil via pupil care plans.
- notifying the Trust's Lead Medical Officer when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs in order for them to seek LA support where appropriate.
- actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- keeping pupils informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully and ensuring pupils are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason.

- ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual pupil's health needs.
- ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency. Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

Parental responsibilities

Parents are expected to: -

- ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible and in line with the school's **attendance policy** (available on the policy page of the school's website).
- work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.
- attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

Managing absences

- parents must contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness and provide regular updates if the illness continues for more than 48hrs.
- the school will provide support to pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupil's parents to arrange schoolwork as soon as the pupil is well enough or able to access part-time education at school. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the pupil, their family and relevant members of staff.
- for periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, the named person with responsibility for pupils with health needs will notify the local authority who will take responsibility for the pupil and their education.
- where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the local authority to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence.
- for hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the local authority regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital.
- the school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education otherwise than at school.

- the school will only remove a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where: -
 - the school has been advised in writing by the pupils named medical professional (or team) as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age and a referral to the attendance support service has been made
 - neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- a pupil unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school register without parental consent even if the local authority has become responsible for the pupil's education.

Support for pupils

- where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupil's needs and how these may be best met with the local authority, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil. The local authority expects the school to support pupils with health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to pupils' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments.
- the school will make reasonable adjustments under the pupils' care plan.
- Where the school has identified that it is not possible for a pupil to attend for a period of more than 15 days due to their medical needs, despite the schools best efforts to make reasonable adjustments, the school will follow their procedures to refer to the Trust's Lead Medical Officer who will look to access local authority provision.
- pupils admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned.
- during a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.
- whilst a pupil is away from school, the school will work with the local authority to ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with their school using methods such as: -
 - school newsletters
 - emails
 - invitations to school events
 - cards or letters from peers and staff

- where appropriate, the school will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.
- to help ensure a pupil with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations will be considered: -
 - a personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the named staff member
 - access to additional support in school
 - online access to the curriculum from home
 - movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
 - places to rest at school
 - special exam arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

Reintegration

- when a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the local authority.
- the school will work with the local authority when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school.
- if appropriate, external medical professionals will be involved in the development of the pupil's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan by the appointed named member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the pupil.
- the school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil.
- for longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the pupil's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill pupil or their parents in the early stages of their absence.
- the school is aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the pupil, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.
- the reintegration plan will include: The date for planned reintegration, once known. Details of regular reviews to consider the progress of the reintegration.
- the school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage pupils and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

Information sharing

- It is essential that all information about pupils with health needs is kept accurate and up-to-date.
- all teachers, teaching assistants, supply and support staff will be provided with access to relevant information, including high-risk health needs, first aiders and emergency procedures.
- when a pupil is discharged from hospital or is returning from other education provision, the school will ensure the appropriate information is received to allow for a smooth return to the school. The named member of staff will liaise with the hospital or other tuition service as appropriate.

Training

- if training is required to assist a pupils return to school and/or manage their condition training will be arranged in time for pupils return.
- healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required.
- training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support pupils with additional health needs.
- parents of pupils with additional health needs may also provide specific advice.

Examinations and assessments

- school staff will liaise with the alternative provision provider over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate.
- relevant assessment information will be provided to the alternative provision provider if required.
- awarding bodies may make special arrangements for pupils with permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be submitted by the school, or local authority if more appropriate, as early as possible.